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OFFICE OF NATIONAL ESTIMATES

SUBJECT: GIS Comment on Soviet Military Force Levels

29 March 1960

It is being assumed that the Soviet Union is indeed carrying out a reduction in its military forces roughly to the extent indicated by Khrushchev. This entails no military risk since, on the one hand, the Soviet government may take into consideration that the West will not attack and, on the other, even the then much reduced Soviet forces would be strong enough to guarantee the internal stability as well as the defense of the external frontiers of the Soviet sphere of influence.

The reduction in strength will mainly affect the army, all the more since its units could be replenished or reactivated the fastest if need be.

The reduction in strength of 1.2 million men will presumably be made as follows:

Army	1,000,000 men (83 percent)
Air Force	100,000 men (8.5 percent)
Navy	100,000 men (8.5 percent)

In Detail (Figures in accordance with your memo of 24 February 1960):

Based on the assumption that the figure given by Khrushchev of 3,623,000 men under arms is correct and that the security troops

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are not included in this figure, the following estimate which offers a breakdown according to arms and branches of service, is submitted (figures in parantheses give the reduction in strength):

(1) Army	2,093,000 (1,000,000)
(2) A.A.A. units, including bomb line rockets	200,000 (Zero)
(3) A.A.A. early warning and fighter control	90,000 (20,000)
(4) Strategic missiles	30,000 (Zero)
(5) Tactical air force	280,000 (35,000)
(6) Air force transport	30,000 ( 5,000)
(7) Long-range air force	90,000 (20,000)
(8) A.A.A. fighter planes	210,000 (20,000)
(9) Naval air force	100,000 (Zero)
(10) Floating units and bases	340,000 (50,000)
(11) Naval infantry, if it exists	40,000 (15,000)
(12) Coast artillery	60,000 (25,000)
(13) Naval land forces	50,000 (10,000)
(14) Defense ministry	10,000 (Zero)

Personnel reduction in flying units concerns mainly ground personnel. Ratio between front-line troops and supporting units approximately 2 to 1 above divisional level.

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On 3:

Breakdown according to assignment:

Army Field	2,103,000 (1,000,000)
Air Defense	500,000 ( 40,000)
Long Range Attack	120,000 ( 20,000)
Tactical Aviation	280,000 ( 35,000)
Naval Ministerial	590,000 ( 100,000)
Transport Aviation	30,000 ( 5,000) (additional)

On 4:

Security troops 350,000,  
of these 175,000 border troops and  
135,000 troops of the interior.

Argument:

I. Army

1. Combat units

Army units can, if necessary, be replenished or reactivated the fastest by means of calling up the trained reserves, as long as there are large reserves of materiel. There exists virtually an

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unlimited supply of trained reserves. The reorganized mobilization system makes possible the mobilization of the first wave within an extremely short period. After the reduction, the Army would presumably be composed of special units, a number of effective divisions regarded a "fire department" in a manner of speaking -- which would be stationed in the approaches to and strategically important areas of the USSR --, and a larger number of cadre units. Doubtless one must also expect that a number of units will be disbanded and that a part of the combat divisions will be transformed into cadre units. Troops stationed in satellite countries will have to be reduced. There are indications that such is the intention. It is considered possible that these measures will free a maximum of 800,000 men.

2. Ground installations

According to an announcement from Malinovsky, of 19 January 1960, made to officers of the Moscow military district, in addition to the disbandment of troop units and formations, planes also provide for reducing the administrative apparatus and for dissolving depots, arsenals, and military training schools.

Positions can be refilled rapidly by reserves through mobilization in case of emergency. Estimated total of reduced manpower in this sector: 200,000 men.

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3. Summary:

On the basis of such considerations, the USSR can reduce army strength by a maximum of 1 million men.

II. Air Force (without naval aviation)

1. Aviation combat units

a) Strategic missiles (ICBMs) cannot completely replace long-range aviation within the period scheduled for the reduction (until fall 1961, according to Malinovsky). Long-range aviation, moreover, what with its current supply of 1,200 bombers of which only 150 are heavy bombers, is limited in range and capacity and does not compare with SAC. When Khrushchev said in his speech that "aviation will be replaced almost completely by rocketry," this must be understood to involve a development of several years which has a bearing, first of all, on the long-range aviation part of the Soviet Air Force. Through the production stop for strategic bombers, the pattern of reports has for some time suggested what Khrushchev announced when he announced the change in the Soviet conception of strategic air warfare.

b) As regards the Soviet tactical air forces, there has been no modern replacement for the tactical bomber IL-28 which has been considered obsolete for years. It is not impossible, to be sure,

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even though it seems rather unlikely in view of Khrushchev's speech that tactical aviation will still receive such a replacement in the form of airplanes which have thus far become known merely as prototypes (Blowlamp, Backfin). Against such a possibility also speaks the effort at multi-purpose utilization of tactical fighters over the theatre of operations of the army which has been observed for some time. See Maj. Gen. Kessler, NVA/LSK: "Jagdflieger der Unterst"tzung" (Fighter Plane Support). Thus it appears that not only the IL-28 but the entire bomber branch of the tactical air forces are included in Khrushchev's "obsolete technical means." In the process which makes for modernization, the bombers could gradually be replaced to a considerable degree by the multi-purpose tactical fighter planes, while the effectiveness of modern weapons and their employment is making headway, and thereafter, in addition, by tactical missiles. In spite of such changes taking shape in the sector of tactical aviation, no indications have yet been found which would suggest that any reduction of Soviet tactical aviation is imminent. Possibly, an elimination of the tactical bombers could partly involve a shift from these bombers to other branches of the air force (e.g. transport aircraft, all-weather fighters), which possibility was insinuated by Khrushchev. In view of the high proportion of depreciation that modern air force

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weapons are subjected to and with regard to Khrushchev's explicitly announced "multiplication of fire power" for the reduced land forces, to which tactical aviation could make a great contribution, tactical aviation, it appears, should to the Soviets be a desirable cover. A reduction in strength in the air force should, within the total framework of the armed forces, result in an increase of personnel for the rocket units.

c) In the A.A.A. sector, the A.A. rocket has increasingly been gaining in importance. Even though this development is still in process it can hardly be imagined that this new weapon could soon fully replace the manned fighters. The consequence of this is that no reduction in the strength of A.A.A. fighter units is conceivable for the time being.

2. Aviation ground service and early warning organization

Release of personnel from aviation ground services appears feasible, especially in the rear zone and technical services. These sectors can rapidly be replenished by trained reserves in the case of mobilization. A further reduction of personnel appears to be possible through the automation of the early warning organization (Sage system) that is to be expected.

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3. Summary:

There are no clear indications as yet on any large reduction in strength having been started. The reduction in strength of the air force could, within the next 2 years, amount to 100,000 men.

III. Navy (including naval air force)

1. A reduction in numbers, within the framework of the announced reduction in strength of the Soviet armed forces, is also likely to occur in the Navy. Thus far, however, there are no indications as yet to the effect that navy personnel is to be shifted over to the Soviet merchant marine. Such a measure would seem to make sense inasmuch as there actually exists a shortage of personnel in the Soviet merchant marine.

2. Floating units and personnel on shore duty

a) Cruisers

Here the possibility exists that some or even all cruisers with conventional weapons (a total of 25) be withdrawn from the operational fleet. With a crew of 1,300 men per cruiser, the reduction in personnel would amount to a maximum of 32,000 men. If the ships are given the status of a reserve fleet, a maintenance crew of about 50 men would be required for each cruiser, but they could be in civilian status. Such "reserve ships" could be made



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operational again at a moment's notice. Yet it is not to be expected that all cruisers will be deactivated since cruisers with rocket weapons are going to come in for which crews that are broken in must be available.

b) Destroyers

The older types of destroyers are likely to be withdrawn. If one assumes a crew of about 280 men per destroyer, that would mean a reduction amounting to 8,000 men. It has been observed that some of these destroyers have already been disarmed and used as auxiliary vessels. Personnel on such units may be transferred to civilian status. Supplying the new types of destroyers now in service with modern weapons would not appear to allow for a reduction in personnel.

c) Other types of ships

For other types of ships such as submarines, submarine chasers or minesweepers a reduction does not appear likely. When obsolete vessels are taken out of service they are likely to be replaced by appropriate new units, especially as far as the smaller types are concerned, and this would hardly affect the manpower requirements.

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d) Personnel on shore duty (service and base personnel)

As a consequence of the reduction of units to be supplied there are about 10,000 men of the base personnel who will no longer be needed. Tabulated, that means:

Reduction cruiser personnel	32,000 men
" destroyer personnel	<u>8,000 men</u>
	40,000 men
" base personnel	<u>10,000 men</u>
Total reduction	50,000 men

3. Another reduction of personnel on shore duty could occur in the coastal defense sector. The possible transfer of regular units into a regional (militia) system would seem to allow a reduction of personnel for the coastal defense units without incurring any significant impairment of their combat readiness. Thereby, about 50,000 soldiers are estimated to be released.

4. Naval air force

A reduction of the naval air force is not expected for the time being because the control of the sea routes must increasingly be made from the air when parts of the surface vessels are withdrawn. Furthermore, the naval air force with its medium-range bombers is

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the most important weapon for restricting enemy aircraft carriers to outside the effective operational area from where the home shores can come under attack. The naval air force also remains indispensable for any offensive mine warfare that is wide in design.

5. Summary

Estimate of possible reduction in force of the navy is 100,000 men. There is a shortage of personnel for commercial ships, mainly of officers. It is to be expected that the navy personnel that will be released will to the largest part be used to man commercial and auxiliary vessels. Such personnel continues to be available to the Soviet navy as an experienced manpower reserve. A part of the shore personnel will presumably accept civilian jobs near the coast in shipyards and port installations after the discharge and can rapidly be reactivated in the case of a mobilization.

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